

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-9, and 11-19 are now pending in the application. Minor amendments have been made to the claims to overcome the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection(s) in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

Claim 7 has been amended to recite "at least one combination of at least two said output ports" to provide the obvious correction of an obvious typographical error, namely, the omission of the word "one." See the originally filed Figure and its description for support in the Application as originally filed.

Claim 14 has been amended to recite, "providing at least three output ports coupled a port switch configured to selectively power said output ports including at least one combination of two or more output ports from a seat connector, wherein each output port has a separate overcurrent protection circuit having a maximum current rating ..." Support for providing at least three output ports will be found at paragraph [0013], lines 6-7 and in Claims 1 and 7 as originally filed, as well as elsewhere in the specification. Support for the output ports being coupled to a port switch configured to selectively power said output ports including at least one combination of two or more output ports from a seat connector will be found in the Figure, at paragraphs [0013] and [0014], and in Claims 1 and 14 as originally filed.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1, 2, 4, 9, and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office rejected Claim 1 and suggested that the term "each said over-current protection circuit" be replaced with "each of said over-current protection circuits." Applicant understands both of these terms to have identical meaning, and thus has incorporated the Office's suggestion into Claim 1. Thus, the rejection of Claim 1 should be withdrawn.

Applicant notes that, although Claim 7 was not rejected by the Office, a similar phrase to that which was rejected in Claim 1 appears. This phrase was similarly amended in Claim 7. No change in scope is intended as a result of this amendment.

The Office rejected Claims 2 and 9 by asserting that "said highest maximum current rating" lacks proper antecedent basis. Applicant cannot locate this term in Claim 2, so it is believed the rejection of Claim 2 was intended to apply to Claim 3. Applicant has amended Claims 3 and 9 to recite "a highest of said maximum current ratings of said overcurrent protection circuits." It is submitted that this term would be understood as the obvious correction of "said highest maximum current rating" by one skilled in the art, and thus, no there is no change in the scope of either Claim 3 or Claim 9. In view of these corrections, it is further submitted that the rejection of Claim 2 (or Claim 3, if such was intended by the Office) and Claim 9 should be withdrawn. (Applicant has also corrected Claim 3 by inserting a period that had been missing at the end of the claim.)

The Office rejected Claims 4 and 10 and suggested the substitution of "one of said port level over-current protection circuits" for "one said port level over-correction circuit." Applicant understands both the rejected term and the suggested term as having identical meanings. Application has amended Claim 10 in accordance with the Office's suggestion. Claim 4 does not recite the exact term rejected by the Office. However, Applicant has amended Claim 4 to substitute "one of said

overcurrent protection circuits" for "one said overcurrent protection circuit." It is submitted that this substitution does not change the scope of Claim 4. For these reasons, it is submitted that the rejection of Claims 4 and 10 as indefinite no longer apply and should be withdrawn.

For the above reasons, it is requested that the section 112 rejections of Claims 1, 2, 4, 9, and 10 be withdrawn.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-3, 7-9, and 14-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by Small (U.S. Pat. No. 6,459,175). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office asserted that Small discloses a power distribution system (Fig. 2B) comprising a power input port (65), at least three power output ports (51A, 51B, 53A, 53B), each having a separate, re-settable over-current protection circuit (47A, 47B and col. 5, lines 57-64), each of the over current protection circuits having its own maximum current rating, and a port switch 67 configured to provide power from the input port to selectable combinations of one or more of the output ports (51A, 53A, and 51B and 53B, respectively), including at least one combination of two or more of the output ports, and further configured to prevent power from being applied to all of the output ports simultaneously (col. 5, lines 60-65).

However, Small at col. 5, lines 60-65 recites "Preferably, the circuit breakers are separate, independent circuit breakers so that one power path may continue operation even when the circuit breaker in the other path has cut off the flow of current to the output terminals along the path." It is apparent from Figure 2B and the cited passage that, to prevent power from being applied to all of the output ports

simultaneously, a circuit breaker must cut off the flow of current to an output port, rendering it non-functional. There is no teaching or suggestion to restrict port switch 67 from *selecting* a combination of all output ports, even if some of them are non-functional because they have been cut off by a circuit breaker.

By contrast, Applicant's Claim 1, as amended, recites, "... a port switch configured to provide power from said input port to selectable combinations of one or more said output ports, including at least one combination of two or more said output ports, said port switch restricted from selecting all said output ports simultaneously." See paragraph [0014], lines 11-15, and paragraph [0016], lines 1-7, as well as Claim 14 as originally filed. No such configuration is shown or suggested by Small. For this reason, it is submitted that Claim 1, as herein amended, is patentable over Small.

Claims 2 and 3 are each dependent, directly or indirectly, upon independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 2 and 3 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, it is submitted that Claims 2 and 3 are likewise patentable over Small.

Claim 7 recites a feature similar to that of Claim 1, namely, "... a port switch configured to provide power from said input port to selectable combinations of one or more said output ports, including at least one combination of at least two said output ports, said port switch further configured to restrict selection of all said output ports simultaneously." Therefore, it is submitted that Claim 7 is patentable over Small for reasons similar to that given with respect to Claim 1.

Claims 8 and 9 are each dependent, directly or indirectly, upon independent Claim 7. When the recitations of Claims 8 and 9 are considered in combination with

the recitations of Claim 7, it is submitted that Claims 8 and 9 are likewise patentable over Small.

Claim 14 as originally filed and as amended herein recites, "... restricting the port switch from selecting combinations of output ports having overcurrent protection circuits with maximum ratings having a total greater than a preselected maximum current." Thus, Claim 14 is patentable over Small for reasons similar to that given with respect to Claim 1.

Claim 15 is dependent upon Claim 14. When the recitations of Claim 15 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 14, it is submitted that Claim 15 is likewise patentable over Small.

For the above reasons, it is requested that the rejection of Claims 1-3, 7-9, and 14-15 under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Small be withdrawn.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 5 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Small in view of Potega (U.S. Pat. No. 6,459,175). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Small is as described above. Nowhere does Small teach or suggest a port switch as recited in Claims 1, 7, and 14 as discussed above.

Potega is directed to a universal, "plug and play" power supply that is able to deliver automatically the varied power requirements of multiple diverse devices attached to it and simultaneously and independently adjust the voltage or current or both supplied to each device, col. 1, lines 8-13. See also col. 11, line 54 to col. 12, line 3. Thus, Potega is directed to a device that plugs into a power port and generates the power requirement of a user device. Although Potega does mention

configurations with switches, none of these switches are configured to provide power from an input port to selectable combinations of one or more output ports, including at least one combination of at least two output ports, wherein the port switch is further configured to restrict selection of all the output ports simultaneously.

For example, Figure 2 of Potega discloses a controllable switch interposed in the path between the power supply and the battery-operated supplied device. A three-pole controllable switch 14 is interposed in powerlines 3 and 4 so that connector 8 may be used also to transfer power and/or data directly from battery 5 to supplied device 12 (thus restoring the connection between battery 5 and the supplied device to the state in which it would exist if connector 8 were not present). Switch 14 can be among other switch types, a multi-contact unit, such as an N-signal switch (with power conductors) or a multiplexer. See col. 32, lines 8-24. The switch may be configured to allow power supply 2 to receive data or power or both from battery 5 and supply an appropriate power signal to supplied device 12 or battery 5, or both simultaneously. See col. 32, lines 45-48. Switch 14 may be used for data or power or both, col. 33, lines 13-15. However, nowhere is it shown or suggested that switch 14 provides power from an input port to selectable combinations of one or more output ports, including at least one combination of at least two output ports, wherein the port switch is further configured to restrict selection of all the output ports simultaneously.

Figure 3 shows a switch 14 located within a primary device 13, col. 33, lines 33-34, but still does not teach or suggest a switch that provides power from an input port to selectable combinations of one or more output ports, including at least one combination of at least two output ports, wherein the port switch is further configured to restrict selection of all the output ports simultaneously. Figure 4 illustrates a

switch 14 integral with a power supply 2, col. 33, lines 39-40, but it still does not teach or suggest a switch that provides power from an input port to selectable combinations of one or more output ports, including at least one combination of at least two output ports, wherein the port switch is further configured to restrict selection of all the output ports simultaneously. Nor does switch 184 teach or suggest this in Figure 5, as switch 184 is a multi-selector switch that links two output ports together, or a single-gang switch, col. 36, lines 59-62, which is used to configure a circuit that detects an excessive load in a controllable regulator, col. 34, lines 2-4. Although the configuration of Figure 6 uses a switch, the DC output is switched to any combination of PD-1, PD-2, PD-3, and PD-4, col. 41, lines 57-62, and each outlet operates independently of any other, or simultaneously with any or all others, col. 40, lines 16-20.

Thus, Potega adds nothing to Small to teach or suggest a switch that provides power from an input port to selectable combinations of one or more output ports, including at least one combination of at least two output ports, wherein the port switch is further configured to restrict selection of all the output ports simultaneously.

By contrast, Applicant's Claim 1, as amended, recites, "... a port switch configured to provide power from said input port to selectable combinations of one or more said output ports, including at least one combination of two or more said output ports, said port switch restricted from selecting all said output ports simultaneously." See paragraph [0014], lines 11-15, and paragraph [0016], lines 1-7, as well as Claim 14 as originally filed. No such configuration is shown or suggested by Small or by the teachings of Small in combination with the teachings of Potega. For this reason, it is submitted that Claim 1, as herein amended, is patentable over Small in view of Potega.

Claim 5 is dependent upon Claim 1. When the recitations of Claim 5 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, it is submitted that Claim 5 is likewise patentable over Small in view of Potega.

Claim 7 as herein amended recites a feature similar to that of Claim 1 discussed above and which is discussed more fully in conjunction with the section 102 rejection over Small. Thus, it is submitted that Claim 7 is patentable over Small in view of Potega for reasons similar to those given with respect to Claim 1.

Claim 11 is dependent upon Claim 7. When the recitations of Claim 11 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 7, it is submitted that Claim 11 is likewise patentable over Small in view of Potega.

For these reasons, it is requested that the rejection of Claims 5 and 11 over Small in view of Potega be withdrawn.

Claims 6, 12, 13, 16, and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Small.

Small is as described above. Nowhere does Small teach or suggest a port switch as recited in Claims 1, 7, and 14 as discussed above.

Claim 6 is dependent upon Claim 1. When the recitations of Claim 6 are considered in conjunction with the recitations of Claim 1, it is submitted that Claim 6 is likewise patentable over Small.

Claims 12 and 13 are directly or indirectly dependent upon Claim 7. When the recitations of Claims 12 and 13 are considered in conjunction with those of Claim 7, it is submitted that Claims 12 and 13 are likewise patentable over Small.

Claims 16 and 17 are dependent upon Claim 14. When the recitations of Claims 16 and 17 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 14, it is submitted that Claims 16 and 17 are likewise patentable over Small.

For these reasons, it is requested that the rejection of Claims 6, 12, 13, 16, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Small be withdrawn.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Examiner states that claims 4 and 10 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. It is submitted that amended claims 4 and 10 as presented herein as allowable as written. However, Claims 18 and 19 as presented herein correspond to representations of Claims 4 and 10 of the originally submitted Application, written in independent form, with all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, and with alleged indefiniteness rejections corrections. Therefore, claims 18 and 19 should be in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will

expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone (314) 726-7500 and request to be connected to the undersigned in the St. Louis office.

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